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NYC Service In-Kind Donation Program Reaches Nearly 14,000 Vulnerable Youth

NYC Service almost tripled the number of youth served with the support of 5,500 volunteers from private sector businesses, diplomatic community, City staff, and other contributions

New York – For the second year in a row, the NYC Service Secret Snowflake program has coordinated a record number of volunteers to donate to approximately 13,969 young people – the most youth served in the 15-year history of the donation program and almost three times as many youth served compared to 2022. The Secret Snowflake program, which began organizing efforts to donate individualized items for youth in need in August 2023, today marked the close of the winter in-kind donation initiative with a final distribution to youth and their families seeking asylum at a shelter in midtown.

“I often say that if New Yorkers committed themselves to one hour of service a week, the results would be transformative,” said **New York City Mayor Eric Adams**. “Everyone who participated in Secret Snowflake has made a tremendous difference in young New Yorkers’ lives through a small act of kindness, and I’m grateful for that. As we enter into the new year, I hope that we all continue to embrace this giving spirit, which is at the core of who we are as New Yorkers.”

“The spirit of the holiday season resonates with the commitment New Yorkers make all year to come together and support each other. This year, our collective efforts have touched the lives of nearly 14,000 vulnerable youth, with more than half being children of families seeking asylum,” said **Chief Service Officer Laura Rog**. “Being able to bring a bit of warmth to a child’s first winter in NYC fuels our belief in the profound impact of service. Thank you to all our corporate partners and city staff for uniting in the pursuit of this powerful cause.”

“The Secret Snowflake initiative is a wonderful way to engage volunteers, corporate partners, and the public sector during the season of giving. We recognize each of the individuals and entities that are supporting this effort and are so happy to deliver so many gifts to children, young people, and families in need,” said **Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom**.

“I’m grateful to everyone who came together this holiday season to support New Yorkers in need,” said **Chief of Staff Camille Joseph Varlack**. “Together, you made a difference in nearly 14,000 young New Yorkers’ lives – nearly half of whom are here for one of their first winters, seeking asylum – through your generosity. Our thanks to the businesses, city agencies, and individuals who participated this year, and my hope for 2024 is that we continue to embody generosity and kindness wherever we go.”

The Secret Snowflake program reached nearly 14,000 young people and their families in the care of City agencies including New York City Administration for Children’s Services (ACS),

New York City Department of Homeless Services (DHS), New York City Public Schools (NYCPS), Mayor's Office to End Domestic and Gender Based Violence (ENDGBV), and New York City Human Resources Administration (HRA). Since last year, the program has also supported youth served by NYC Health + Hospitals, with this agency representing more than half of youth served—7,689 youth ages 0-14 years old served at a Humanitarian Emergency Response and Relief Centers (HERRCs).

The combined contributions of more than 5,500 employees at 41 businesses represent over 80% of all contributions. Businesses committed to engaging their employees in the donation program in September and have since partnered closely with NYC Service and other agencies to respond to the needs of young people. This year 11 new businesses came forward to partner with NYC Service, joining the 30 businesses returning to participate in the program. By October of this year, businesses quickly fulfilled the 6,280 letters submitted by youth in need and served by ACS, DHS, NYCPS, ENDGBV, and HRA.

The businesses that contributed to Secret Snowflake in 2023 include:

A&E Television Networks, LLC.	Founder Shield	Pfizer
Allen & Company	Future US	Prudential Private Capital
AlphaSights	Greenlight Bookstore	Revlon
Arax Investment Partners	HarperCollins	SL Green Realty Corp.
AXIS	Holt Construction Corp.	Sony Corporation of America
Books Are Magic	January Digital	Sound Point Capital
Brookfield	Loring Consulting Engineers, Inc.	Synchrony
BSE Global	KPMG	Synpulse
Chanel	Macy's	The Bliss Group
Citigroup, Inc.	Macquarie Group	The New York Times Company
Deloitte	Miller Druck Specialty Contracting	Tory Burch
Deutsche Bank	Minute Media	Triumvirate Environmental
Extend Enterprises, Inc.	Mizuho Americas	Turner Construction Company
FGS Global	Natixis	

Organized groups played a significant role in galvanizing networks to donate items to youth served through the Secret Snowflake initiative. Mayor's Office employees, as well as staff from other City agencies, contributed donations to the program as part of the annual Mayor's Office winter donation drive. The Mayor's Office of International Affairs, a long-time partner in supporting the in-kind donation program, organized 179 donations from the diplomatic community. This year, houses of worship and faith-based groups partnered to serve youth through the Secret Snowflake Initiative, adding more than 500 donations from their congregations and communities. Coalition for the Homeless also donated 250 new umbrella strollers for families seeking asylum as part of the Secret Snowflake initiative.

Bulk donations and cash donations this year helped expand the reach of youth served through Secret Snowflake. Books are Magic and Greenlight Bookstore, both located in Brooklyn, together engaged customers to donate a combined 679 books in both English and Spanish for youth in HERRCs, and 1,022 books for youth served by ACS. Huron Consulting Group received a grant to secure donations for 2,985 youth seeking asylum at HERRCs. The Henry Chang Foundation, a foundation comprised of DCAS employees that was created to honor a former DCAS stationary engineer who passed in the line of duty, helped secure donations for more than 1,380 youth in shelter with a contribution to the Secret Snowflake initiative.

NYC Service also processed 2,309 individual donations using its new online in-kind donation platform available to New York City-based organizations, which allows organizations to make lists of in-kind donation needs for members of the public to donate, purchase donations at a retailer of their choice, then ship or deliver to the organization. Donated items collected via the NYC Service website included baby hygiene kits, art sets, school supplies, sports equipment, and stuffed animals.

This year, organizing the large volume of donations for youth at HERRCs required the support of volunteers to unbox, sort, and prepare thousands of individual donations for distribution to youth at shelters. Miller Druck Specialty Contracting, a woman-owned business in the Bronx that has been participating in Secret Snowflake for four years, also contributed to the Secret Snowflake initiative by warehousing approximately 25,000 donations shipped by volunteers for youth in shelter. Participating businesses in New York City also hosted collections and employee engagement events in support of Secret Snowflake.

“The generosity of New Yorkers is legendary. Hats off to NYC Service and their partners for the Secret Snowflake initiative – a beautiful conduit for New Yorkers’ love and compassion,” said **New York City Chief Engagement Officer Betsy MacLean**. “This year, the team has outdone themselves, almost tripling the number of people we serve – from 5,000 to nearly 14,000. Thank you to all participants who help us remember what makes New York, New York.”

“The compassion of New Yorkers knows no bounds, and thanks to their generosity, nearly 14,000 children will receive a gift for the holidays,” said **Dr. Ted Long, Senior Vice President of Ambulatory Care and Population Health for NYC Health + Hospitals**. “For our newest and youngest New Yorkers, many of whom have experienced indescribable trauma on their journey to our city, these gifts show that they are welcome, and that here they can start new lives free from fear. I am deeply grateful to all our partners, humanitarian center staff, and volunteers who supported the Secret Snowflake initiative to brighten the day for thousands of kids.”

“For over fifteen years our office has proudly participated in NYC Service’s Secret Snowflake program,” said **New York City Mayor’s Office to End Domestic and Gender-Based Violence Commissioner Cecile Noel**. “Each year our Family Justice Center staff rely on the Secret Snowflake program to provide toys to the children of survivors who access the Centers. This incredible public and private sector partnership brings joy and wonder to the lives of these children at a time that can be disruptive and unsettling while also offering survivor-parents the chance to give their children the gifts they so want and deserve.”

“While the youth of this city are our future, this time of year reminds us that countless children are in need of everyday supplies, support, and services that many take for granted,” said **Department of Citywide Administrative Services Commissioner Dawn M. Pinnock**. “We are proud to have once again supported NYC Service in their mission to enrich and uplift the lives of thousands of children in need of help, and a special thanks to our very own members of the Henry Chang Foundation for their commitment to the children of this city.”

“NYC proudly hosts the United Nations and the world’s largest diplomatic corps that contribute to our five boroughs,” said **Edward Mermelstein, NYC Mayor’s Office for International Affairs Commissioner**. “United with our diplomatic partners, we radiate hope through the

transformative Secret Snowflake program. This year holds special meaning, as many youths in our care represent asylum seekers and immigrants who dream of a brighter future. Their aspirations echo our collective mission: ensuring every New Yorker lives a better life regardless of origin. NYC expresses gratitude to the United Nations, consulates, and permanent missions for their unwavering support."

"We are grateful for our private sector partners and their employees, whose unprecedented donations helped Secret Snowflake reach more youth than ever before this winter," **said Chief of External Affairs Meaghan Brown**. "Our business community's generosity exemplifies the spirit of giving that defines New York City and the holiday season."

"As a purpose-driven organization passionate about giving back, The Bliss Group is proud to participate in New York City's Secret Snowflake initiative each year to help local youth celebrate the holidays," **said Cortney Stapleton, CEO of The Bliss Group**. "It has been gratifying to see our entire firm come together to celebrate the season by making a positive impact for children in our community."

"Secret Snowflake has become an annual tradition in our New York office, with employees coming together to generously meet the wishes of youth. This year, Deutsche Bank fulfilled 950 letters from the Department of Homeless Services, which is a testament to our commitment to ensuring the needs of our community are met while bringing joy during the holiday season," **said Alessandra DiGiusto, Head of Corporate Social Responsibility Americas at Deutsche Bank and the Executive Director of the Deutsche Bank Americas Foundation**.

"Holt Construction is thankful to partner with Secret Snowflake for the third year in a row. During such a challenging time for so many, this initiative makes the holiday season even more meaningful by providing a positive impact in our local community and fulfilling wishes to bring joy to New York City children and youth during the holiday season," **said Danielle Keane, Holt Construction Corp**.

"Pfizer is thrilled to be part of this year's Secret Snowflake campaign and appreciative of the colleagues who donated to help create joy for 250 New York City children and teens this holiday season," **said Yolanda Lyle, Senior Vice President of Executive Operations and NYHQ Site Lead at Pfizer**.

"Secret Snowflake embodies the true holiday spirit of bringing joy and happiness. It is an honor to partner with NYC Service to make this season special for children across New York City, and I am very proud of our staff who are helping 600 children and their families celebrate the holidays." **said Shuji Matsuura, Chairman & CEO, Mizuho Americas**.

"We are incredibly grateful and fortunate to partner with NYC Service and the Mayor's Office for the third consecutive year. Being part of Secret Snowflake has become a cherished tradition for our team. Each year, we eagerly anticipate this meaningful initiative that allows us to fully embrace the true spirit of the season, by helping those most in need in New York City," **said Engin Okaya, Managing Director, Prudential Private Capital**.

About NYC Service

NYC Service is a division of the Mayor's Office providing meaningful access, opportunity, and resources for communities to come together and answer the call to serve NYC. We envision a



city where New Yorkers are united by service and together build a culture where New Yorkers uplift one another and take responsibility for the success of our city. Learn more at nyc.gov/service.

Businesses interested in supporting youth in New York City can contact SecretSnowflake@cityhall.nyc.gov for additional information about employee engagement opportunities.

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